

A N<sup>o</sup> 15  
S E R M O N

Preach'd at *Towcester*,  
ON

The *Fast-day*, June 10th 1702.

Wherein is shew'd,

First, How *Sin* is the great *Enemy*, or  
*Hindrance* to our *Peace* and *Security*.

Secondly, What the *Reformation* should be,  
which may procure us a *firm* and *lasting*  
*Peace*; from these Words in *Isaiah* 59. 8.  
----- *They have made them crooked paths:*  
*whosoever goeth therein shall not know*  
*Peace.*

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of *Towcester*. *K*

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O X F O R D: *C*

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 Ifaiah LIX. 8.

— *They have made them crooked paths : whosoever goeth therein, shall not know peace.*

**T**HAT *Peace* and *Unity* are necessary to the *Safety* and *Welfare* of a *Kingdom*, is not only to be prov'd, from the *Calamities* and *Desolation*, that *Divisions* bring upon it, (*Mat. 12. 25.*) but from the *Prayers*, which we offer up to *Heaven* for the foremen- tion'd *Blessings*, and the *War* we engage in upon *Earth* to obtain them.

But yet, tho' these *Blessings* be thus necessary, is it not evident, that we both want and deprive our selves of them? When, besides our *War* with the *Common Enemy*, there are also *Divisions* and *Animosities* amongst our selves. It is true, we do not fail to *Pray* against these *Evils*, yet is their *Continuance* chiefly owing to our *Lusts* and *Sins*; when, tho' we both argue and *pray* for *Union*, we are indispos'd to embrace it, unless to be attain'd by our own *Devices* and *Parties*.

Nay, Is it not evident, that we hinder our own Peace, and continue the *Grievances* of the *Nation*? when, tho' the *Iniquities* of the *Land* are its greatest Enemies, we either *encourage*, or suffer them amongst us. But surely in vain do we expect to be at *Peace*, either with God, our selves, or others, by way of Covenant and Blessing from Him, unless we *reform*. If, indeed, we leave our Sins, and subdue our Lusts, there is great Reason to hope, that the QUEEN may be our *Nursing Mother*\*, and our present *War* the means of a lasting *Peace*, both to our selves and Allies; yea, what is a greater Blessing, we may be under the Defense and Favour of the *Everlasting Father*, and *God of Peace*; otherwise, let us not think it strange, that we are a *divided* and *endanger'd*, if we still continue a *wicked* People; when, besides the disturbing Effects of Sin in themselves, it is also declar'd in the Text, *That they who go in crooked paths, shall not know peace*, that is, not so as to enjoy it, by way of Favour and Blessing from God.

*They have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.*

From which Words I shall endeavour to shew,

I. First, How the Wickedness of a Nation is the chief *Enemy*, or Hindrance to its *Peace* and *Security*.



II. Secondly, That if we expect a firm and lasting *Peace*, amongst others, the Covenanted means to procure it, are our *Piety* and *Reformation*.

III. What the *Reformation* should be, which may procure us such *Peace*.

IV. Lastly, I shall make some Inferences, and conclude.

I. First, How the Wickedness of a Nation is the chief *Enemy*, or Hindrance to its *Peace* and *Security*.

Now, as they are either *Open Enemies* from *without*, or else Divisions and treacherous Members *within*, that are the chief Instruments, whereby the *Peace* of a Nation is disturb'd, so I proceed to prove, that it is the *Wickedness* of such *Nations*, which giveth the foremention'd Enemies their greatest Force, and evil Influence.

And, First, tho' I might shew, how Sin provoketh GOD to be our Enemy, to *fight* against us with the Heavens, yea, to burn up our Land with *Drought* \*, yet are we not without Proofs, <sup>\* 3e</sup> or Examples, how it both raises up Enemies <sup>Psa</sup> from *Men*, and makes them *prevalent* over us, <sup>34</sup> if we either consider what is said in *Levit.* 26. <sup>Hag</sup> and *Deut.* 28. or else GOD's Dealings with the People of *Israel* and *Judah*; when it was not only for its Sins, that *Samaria* was led Captive,   
 2 Kings

2 *Kings* 17. 6, 7, 8. but they were the Iniquities of *Judah*, that both rais'd up *Nebuchadnezzar* (*that Aspiring Monarch*) against it, and also made him the more successful in his *Victories* and *Cruelty*, *Jer.* 25. 9. and 50. 7.

Nor is it less to be imputed to our Iniquities, should *GOD* suffer our Enemies to be *Lords* over us; we perhaps may lay the Blame on each other, and accuse the Male-Administration of Affairs; or we may charge our want of Success and Calamities upon *divided Counsels*, or *treacherous Officers*, both amongst our selves, and Allies; yet yet however these may be the Occasion, or *Instruments*, they are our Sins, that no less strengthen our Enemies *Force*, than weaken our *own*; that even bind our Armies (as it were with Chains) and our Navies with Links of Iron, so that they may not be able to save, or defend us. Nor is this to be thought strange, if we consider, that *Victory* and Salvation come not from them, but *GOD*,\* who vouchsafes them, *when*, and *how* he pleaseth. And now can we expect, that *GOD* will *fight for us*, if we rebel against him, and even dare him to draw out the *Sword* of his Vengeance against us, by Iniquity? No! However, to keep the Enemy from *blaspheming*, he may do more for us, than we deserve, yet if we consider, how oft the Lord *sold* his own People, for their Sins, into the *Hands* of their Enemies†; we are not with-

out reason to *fear*, that unless we Repent, we may rather be *ruin'd*, than *fav'd* by the present *War*, if tho' we have many Allies to help us, we also have many National Sins to *hinder* our Success; for so GOD tells the *Jews*, that however their Allies, the *Egyptians*, had once rais'd the Siege of *Jerusalem*, yet should it at length be destroy'd; *Yea, tho' (saith the Prophet) ye had smitten the whole Army of the Chaldeans, and there remain'd but wounded Men, yet even they should rise up in their Tents, and burn the City with Fire. Jerem. 37. 8, 9.* Nay, what do we own less in our Prayers, upon the late Fast-days, but to be given into the Hands of our Enemies, unless we Repent, is both our *Desert* and *Fear*?

II. Secondly, Herein is the Wickedness of a Nation the chief Enemy, or Hindrance to its *Peace and Security*, viz. Because it encreases, or continues *Divisions* and *Animosities* in it. *From whence come Wars and Fightings, come they not hence, even of your Lusts, which war in your Members?* James 4. 1.

And may not this Expostulation be apply'd to us? Has any Nation greater Reasons to be at Unity with it self, than ours? Have we not a *powerful* and implacable *Enemy* against us, and our Church? Nay, have we not our own Prayers, and the Desires of a *Gracious* and *Religious*



Speech  
5<sup>th</sup>

QUEEN\*, as so many Calls and Obligations, to lay aside our intestine Discords? And yet still, are we not a divided People? And is it not to be fear'd, that many *industriously* endeavour to keep up unhappy Differences amongst us, and that in a *Reign*, wherein we can want no Motive for an Universal Agreement and Unanimity? Yet what is the Cause? Tho' I will not say, that this happens to us, as a *Judgment* for our *past* Differences and Animofities, that since we would *divide*, we should *still* be *divided*; yet this I fear, *viz.* That besides the Attempt of the Common Enemy, and his Agents, to maintain and keep up our Divisions and Parties, we our selves do not fail to continue, (if not encrease) them, from our own vicious Practices, and *Sinister* Designs; that not only *shew* and *make* us to be Cruel and Ambitious, but lessen (if not destroy) that *Love*, *Trust*, and *Confidence*, which should be amongst us; and, consequently, tend to support and encrease Variance and Differences.

III. Thirdly, Herein also is the Wickedness of a Nation the chief Enemy, or Hindrance to its Peace and Security, Because it tends to *infatuate* and invalidate its Counfels. One of the chief Means to heal the Diseases, and restore the Peace of a Nation, and to *make War with Success*, as far as Human Foresight can carry



us, is the wise Advice of its *Senators*, in the *Multitude whereof there is Safety*, Prov. 20. 18. and 24. 6. But now, if neither a People, nor its *Senators* hearken to the Voice of the Lord, but persist in Sinning against him, there is little reason to suppose, that their Counsels will either be *blest*, or *safe*. For as Christ tells us, *That Men do not gather Grapes of Thorns, nor Figs of Thistles* \*; so, that which should \* *Mat* lessen our Dependance, upon the Advice of the Wicked, is this, *viz.* That if their own Lusts do not prompt them to the Use of such Methods, which may support, or consist with themselves, yet being wicked in their Lives, they are the less in GOD's Favour; and consequently, having the less of his *Spirit*, there is not likely to be the *Spirit of good Counsel*, where there is not the *Spirit and Fear of the Lord*. For tho' it is not denied, that Men, who are Wicked, may yet be *Cunning* and *Politick* in *their* way, (and so is the *Devil* in his) yet still, they having an Indisposition to Piety, and being also *Enemies* to GOD, they are the less capable to promote the Reformation and Safety of their Country. And hence it is, that tho' their *Gifts* and *Actions* may be directed by GOD, for the Good of a Nation, and that even contrary to the Designs of such Men; (thus GOD order'd *Haman's* Advice to be for *Mordecai's* Honour, and thereby also the *Jews* Safety + ) Yet <sup>+ Es. 6</sup>

Yet still, however, this may be a Cause of Trust in, and Thanksgiving to God, it is *not* so to the Wicked, when, besides that their good Consultations are *accidental* and *inconstant*, it is not to be supposed, that they will be *heartly* in the *Proposal*, or *Execution* of *those Laws*, for Piety and *Reformation*, which they themselves act against, or *disobey*.

Thus for Instance, Tho' God may put it into the Heart of a *Jehu* to destroy *Baal*, or may make the Wicked the Instruments for the Proposal of good *Laws*; yet *still*, as in the Instance of *Jehu*, we find, that he kept to the Calves of *Jeroboam*\*. So usually we do not expect, or find, that God's Honour is promoted by *Atheists*, or the Christian Religion by *Deists*, any more than we suppose, that *Whore-mongers* or *Adulterers*, (if left to their Liberty) will either be strict Law-givers against, or impartial Punishers of Whoredom and *Uncleanness*.

But to proceed, Supposing that the *Advice* of the Wicked be not *Deceit* in it self, and that the *City* (or Government) is not *over-thrown* by it; as, if you believe the Wise Man, it may†: yet herein is the evil Influence of Sin, upon the Counsels of a *Nation*, that, in Punishment for its Sins, God oftentimes disappoints and confounds *them*; so that the *Counsel* of *Ahitophel* is defeated and turn'd into *Foolishness*. 2 Sam. 17. 14. Nor are we without a remarkable Instance

of this in *Isa. 2. v. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.* where it is not only said, that GOD would set the *Egyptians* against each other, but he would destroy their Counsels, so that their *Wise-men* should not heal the Breaches of *Egypt*, That even the *Princes of Zoan* should become *Fools*, and the *Counsel of the wise Counsellors* should become *brutish*; and, by their Advice, they who were to be the Stay of *Egypt*, should *seduce* it. These *Princes* and *Statesmen* had, no doubt, in themselves, the Prudence and Conduct of other *Men*: But *Egypt* having provoked GOD to destroy it, he therefore, in order to its Ruine, is said to *mingle* a perverse Spirit in the midst of its Counsels, thro' which they did not save, but caus'd that Nation to *err as a drunken Man staggers in his Vomit*; that is, their *Resolutions* were so various and uncertain, that they did not know what Methods to take for the Safety of their Country, *There was not any Work for Egypt, which the Head or Tail, Branch or Rush might do*, but all, both *high* and *low* were in Confusion.

Lastly, Herein also is the Wickedness of a Nation the chief Enemy, or Hindrance to its *Peace* and *Security*, because it tends to *overthrow*, or hinder the Use and Benefit of its *Princes*.

For, First, Is it not for the Sins of a Nation, that its *Princes* are wicked, and by them it is



punish'd? What do we own less in the *Book of Homilies*, concerning *Rebellion*, if those Words in *Hosea* 13. 11. do not also prove it, *I gave thee a King in my Wrath*, whether they be meant of *Saul* or *Jeroboam*?

Secondly, Is it not from Sin also, that even good Kings and Queens may be taken away in *Displeasure*, when they could least be spar'd? What does the Scripture intimate less, when as it declares, *That if ye do wickedly, ye shall be consum'd, both ye and your King.* 1 Sam. 12. 25. 'So  
' it was not only for *Zion's Sins*, that her *Enemies* favour'd not her *Priests*, and respected  
' not her *Elders*, but even the *Anointed of the*  
' *Lord*, that King, under whose Shadow they  
' propos'd to live amongst the *Heathen*, even  
' *He* was taken in their Pits. *Lament.* 4. 16, 20.

Thirdly, If we believe the Scripture, it is declar'd, that *For the Transgressions of a Land, many are its Princes*: by which Words, if it will not be allow'd, that, in Punishment of a Kingdom for its Sins, God may suffer its Monarchical Government to be turn'd into a Republick, or to have many Governours at one time\*, yet may we conclude it a fore Judgment, where the Changes of its *Supreme Governours* are *various* and *violent*†.

But farther, not to insist upon the particular *Troubles* and *Snares*, which fall upon Nations, under such *Changes*, it is not only remarkable,

that

that after the *Revolt* of the *Ten Tribes* from the true Worship of God, and the *House of David*, there was scarcely *One*, amongst all the Kings of *Israel*, that was good, but besides the frequent *Revolutions* of the Government, from one Family to another, in a short Compass of Time, *Eight*, at least, of the *Eighteen Kings*, died violent Deaths \*.

And now, as it is not suppos'd, but under the various and violent Changes of their Princes, great were the Miseries of *Israel*, by *Divisions*, *Poverty*, *Invasion* and other Sufferings. 1 Kings 16. 21. 2 Kings 15, 26. 29. So that the People of *Israel* were afflicted by *Multitude of Princes*, that not only at length their King *Hoshea* was led *Captive*, but that they had no more Kings of *Israel*, the Scripture declares to be in Punishment for its Sins. 2 Kings 17. 46. 9.

Thus also, it is not only said, *Hosea* 8. 4. *They have set up Kings, but not by me, they have made them Princes, and I knew it not, of their Silver and Gold have they made them Idols, that they may be cut off.* But *Hosea* 10. 3. it is declar'd, *Now they shall say we have no King, because we fear'd not the Lord, what then should a King do to us?*

And thus I have shew'd, in several Particulars, how the Wickedness of a Nation is the chief Enemy, or Hindrance to its Peace and Security, viz. First, because it not only makes God our

Enemy, but Men also. 2. It causes and *continues* within it Divisions and Animosities. 3. It tends to infatuate and invalidate its *Counsels*. 4. It conduces to overthrow, and hinder the Use and Benefit of its *Princes*.

And tho', for the farther Proof of this First Head, particularly in the last Instance, I might lay before you the Confession of our CHURCH in two Collects, appointed to be used on the XXX. of *January*, wherein it is declar'd, that they were the Sins of the Nation which brought down the heavy Judgment upon it, of King *Charles the First's Death*, that Excellent and Religious Prince \*.

*First for and* I say, tho' I might urge our own *Fears* and *Confessions*, as a further *Argument* to prove my First Head, yet it will be the more remarkable, if I lay before you the *pious Declaration* of our *most Gracious and Religious Queen* to this Purpose, dated *March 26. 1702.*

Wherein it is not only declar'd, 'That Vice, 'Prophaneness, Debauchery, and Immorality, 'if not timely remedied, may justly draw down 'the Divine Vengeance on us and our *Kingdoms*; 'but also, that we cannot expect the Blessing and 'Goodness of Almighty God, to make our 'Reign happy and prosperous to *our self* and 'Kingdoms, nor hope for the Divine Assistance 'to *deliver* us from the great and *imminent* 'Dangers, which our Kingdoms, and the true



‘Protestant Religion, establish’d amongst us,  
 ‘are, in this *present Juncture*, threatened with,  
 ‘*without a religious Observance of God’s Holy*  
 ‘*Laws.*

And thus having treated of the First, I proceed to the Second Head, *viz.* That if we expect a firm and lasting Peace, amongst others, the *Covenanted Means* to procure it, are our *Piety and Reformation.* ad

And this I shall endeavour to prove, First, from the Promises and Declarations, Secondly, from the *Dispensations* and Dealings of God, recorded in Scripture.

As to the Promises, tho’ they are many, both in the Books of *Moses* and the *Prophets*; yet those I shall more particularly mention, are in *Levit.* 26. v. 5, 6, 7. and in *Deut.* 28. v. 7. 10. in which, as it is promised, that if his People would serve him, *They should dwell in their Land safely, yea God would give them Peace, and none should make them afraid; so should not the Sword go through their Land:* ‘but rather, if ‘they were to go to *war* with their Enemies, *they should chase*, but not be chased by them, nay ‘others also should be afraid of them.

Very remarkable also are the Promises made to *Repentance*, as well as *Piety*: thus tho’ God threatneth, in *Jerem.* 18. 7, 8. *To pull down and destroy a Nation* for its *Sins*, yet is not this absolutely, but rather with a *Proviso*, that if  
such

such a Nation repents of the *Evils done*, GOD will *remove* or *defer* the *Evils threatned*.

Nay, in *Hosea* 6. 1, 2, 3, the Readiness of GOD to *save*, is urg'd as a Motive for a Nation's Return: *Come and let us return unto the Lord*, and then tho' *He hath torn us*, I may add, tho' we have miserably torn our selves, *he will heal us, he hath smitten and he will bind us up, after two Days he will revive us, and we shall live in his Sight*.

Nor, in the Second Place, were GOD's Dispensations disagreeable to his Promises:

For tho' it is not denied, but according to the Threatnings, they were often *sold* to their Enemies, because of their *Sins*, yet, upon their Reformation, were they as often *deliver'd*.

Nor did GOD irreversibly put a Period to their Peace, till they had rejected the ways of it, and became impenitently *sinful*, when tho' for their Backslidings, he permitted the *Ark* itself to be taken away by the *Philistines*, and gave the Heathen *Dominion* over them, yet did not he fail at length to raise them up a *David*, by whose *Valour* they subdued, and became a *Terror* to their Enemies; an account of which we have repeated *Psal.* 78. v. 60, 61, 62. 66. 70, 71, 72.

It must be confess'd, notwithstanding former Promises and Dispensations, such was the Wickedness of *Manasseh*, and the former Ido-

latry of the *Jewish* Nation, in *his* and *Amon's* Days \*, that tho' *Josiah* was zealous to reform the Land, yet were not the *Judgments* threatned<sup>3, 4</sup> to be *wholly* remov'd; nay rather the Death of *Josiah* was a Judgment of GOD upon his People; and also, GOD declares by *Jeremy*, that however, upon the Return of his People, 'He would *save Judah*, and *Jacob* should be at rest, yet would not he leave them altogether unpunish'd. *Jerem.* 30. 11. Yet still herein consists the Benefit of Reformation, that it not only removes the future Causes of Misery, but prevails upon GOD, either to *mitigate* or *defer* his Anger, which otherwise would be more speedy and severe in its Effects.

And thus, no doubt, it was not only a promis'd Return to *Josiah's* Reformation, and Piety, that *he* should not see the *Evil*, but also a *Mercy* to his Subjects, to be repriev'd from it in *his* Days †.

Secondly, Tho' I cannot say, that all the Dispensations of GOD are to be expected by<sup>† 20</sup> other Nations, in the same manner, as were shewn to the People of *Israel* and *Judah*; yet so far I conclude, that GOD will no less reward, than he commands true Reformation in all Nations; especially since the Blessing of it descended upon *Nineveh* it self. Upon a City whose Wickedness came up to *Heaven*, a City full of Blood, Robbery and Lies\*; and also<sup>\* Nah</sup> under



under the Threatning, *Yet Forty Days and Nineveh shall be over-thrown*: And yet so good an Event had the Cry and Return of its Inhabitants, that they *lengthen'd* its Peace, and procur'd a *Respite*, at least, from their Destruction †.

And now, shall we in this Nation despair of Peace and Safety? Let us set upon Reforming in *earnest*, and pursue it *thoroughly*, and *sinful as we are*, we may yet hope, that the *Storm* will blow over us, and that *God's Indignation* (if not *Man's*) *will be overpast*. Isa. 26. 20. Who knows, but after we are *refin'd*, and made fit for God's Service, he will yet *restore us to our ancient Glory*. Ezek. 36. 11. and make us a *Terror to that Nation*, which, as to outward Danger, is the chiefest Cause of our present *Fears*.

God indeed may be so far provoked, by the Sins and Ingratitude of a People, under the Receipt of former Deliverances, that if *Noah, Job, and Daniel* were alive, they may not, by all their *Intercessions*, be able to prevent the Divisions and Ruine of their Nation: Nor can I deny, but there may be a *Day of Peace* for Nations, beyond which, if they sin, they shall have no more; and this Christ declared of *Jerusalem*, 'because it had not known the things 'that belong'd to her *Peace*, in *its Day*, they

were *hidden* from its Eyes. *Luke 19. 42.*

But why was this? Was it not because it *rejected* the Ways of Peace? When therefore God calls upon a Nation to Reform, and also offers them Assistances and Encouragements to that End, it is not yet in that deplorable Condition of *Jerusalem*: And I may safely suppose, that where God gives a People the Grace to repent, and follow the Concerns of their Peace, the *Day* of it is not yet past with them: For tho' Christ declares, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish* \*. Yet does it not follow, *we shall*, but rather the Exception is an Argument, we shall *not perish*, if we are but so wise as to Repent. Nor is this to be doubted, if we consider farther God's Declaration concerning *Egypt*, which, tho' a Nation not in Covenant with God, a Nation not only infatuated in its Counsels, but appointed to *Drink the Cup of God's Fury* for its Transgressions; yet was it not so devoted to Ruine, but, upon its Return, God would be *Entreated for, and heal its Sores*. Nay farther, *Egypt* should be a Nation whom he would *bless*. *Isa. 29. 22. 25.*

And therefore, if we would *know*, whether we are in the way to Peace and Safety, what can I do less, than desire you to enquire, how our Case stands as to Reformation?

I doubt not, but we both wish and hope for Peaceable Times; nor can I say, but we are in

Prospect of them, however at present we are engag'd in War, especially if, with the Endeavours of our Religious QUEEN, we also do our Parts; but yet unless we are fit for such *Times*, and can gather some Hopes, by our own *Amendment*, as well as by the *Prayers*, the *Counsels*, and *Arms* of Her Majesty, we may both *deceive*, and be *deceiv'd* in them. Do we then hope for a firm and lasting Peace at the last? Let us examin into the *State* of our *Souls*, as well as that of the Nation? Are we reconcil'd to GOD? Then may we expect to be at Unity with our selves; and also, that he will either subdue, or else make even our *Enemies to be at peace with us, when our ways please him*. Prov. 16. 7. Otherwise, if we will not reconcile our selves to GOD, nor yet cease to offend him with our Sins, we are not the *Peace-makers*, but  
 118. the *Troublers* of our *Israel* †.

But now, on the other hand, do we find, that after all the late *Changes* and *Revolutions* in other Affairs, we are also *chang'd* and *Reform'd* in our Lives: Let us not despair, but *Lift up our Heads, for our Redemption draws nigh*, and that because we have already conquer'd our greatest *Enemies*, our *Sins*.

To conclude this *Head*; Happy is that Nation, *Wherein all things go well, where there is no Leading into Captivity, and no Complaining in its Streets* \*; no Fears from without, no  
 12. Dan



Dangers from within, *Happy are the People that are in such a Case*: But yet who shall be thus happy, I cannot say, except *those that have the Lord for their God*, and act as *his People*, by their true Reformation.

The Consideration of which leads me to the Third Head of this Discourse, *viz.* What the Reformation should be which should procure a firm and lasting Peace.

This ought, First, to be *Real*, and not in Formality or *Pretence* only. Secondly, It is to be *entire*, and not *partial*.

First, It is to be *Real*.

It is not denied, that, of late Years, many have been the Days of Fasting and Humiliation, in which, besides our Prayers for *Pardon* of Sin, there are others for Union and Peace: But tho' thus to *fast* and *pray* be our Duty and Interest, yet I add, unless we leave our Sins and Divisions, that we bewail and pray against, *What do we more than others?* Mat. 5. 47. For even *Hypocrites* can keep Fasts, and our *Enemies* can have Days of Prayer, for *God's Blessing* upon *their Forces*, no less than we beg it upon *ours*: if therefore we would enjoy the Benefits of a Reformation, we must *bring forth Fruits meet for it*†: we must abstain from our† *M* Iniquities, and add *Piety* and *Charity* to our *Prayers*; otherwise, tho' we keep Days of Prayer and Fasting, (*Year after Year, yea Month after Month,*)

3. 4. *Month,* ) if yet *we fast for Strife and Debate*\*, or if we Pray, it is not upon right Ends, but to gratify carnal and sinful Designs; if we either add *Evil Means* to our good Prayers, or continue Enemies to God in our Hearts, altho' *we honour him with our Lips*, there is little Reason to suppose, that either such Prayers, that are made to *serve Turns*, or such Fasting from Meat, which yet consists with the Keeping of Sin, will be *accepted as Reformation*, or procure God's Peace†.

4. II. Secondly, This Reformation ought to be *entire*, and not *partial*.

That is, we ought not to allow our selves in any Sins unrepented of, and not corrected, (otherwise, it is not *true*.)

Thus for Instance, if tho' we hate *Baal's* Priests, and yet retain *Jeroboam's* Sins, if we cry out *mightily* against *Persecution* for *Conscience*, and yet *persecute* each other for Interest, or, at least, do that to *others* which we should call *Persecution*, if done to our selves. How can this be call'd *Reformation*, any more than those can be call'd *true Reformers*, who punish Vice and Immorality in *Enemies* and the *Poor*, and yet connive at, or forbear punishing them in their *Friends*, or the *Great*.

Nay farther, if Men cry out against the Sins of the *Nation*, and yet retain their *own*, if their *Zeal* against Vice consists more in repro-

ing others, than in mending themselves, and tho' they talk earnestly for *Union* and *Moderation*, are yet in their own Behaviour *factions*, *schismatical* and *uncharitable*, this is not truly to be Reform'd. And, if on the one hand, some are zealous against *Papery*, as to some Parts of it, (such are Praying to Saints, Transubstantiation, and the like) and yet, in other Instances, hold *Jesuitical* Principles, such as those of *Deposing*, and *Killing Kings*; and, if on the other hand, some do not yield to a Ceremony (altho' not enjoyn'd, as any *Part* of Worship) and yet persist in Fraud, Malice, Lying and evil Speaking, will you call *these Reformers*? Just with as much Reason as those can be call'd good *Churchmen*, who talk *highly* in its Praise, and Curse Dissenters from, yet seldom or never resort to the Worship of our *Church*.

Lastly, If the Profession of the true Religion amongst us, is of no longer Continuance than the present *Establishment* of it, by *Human Laws*, if, like the *Israelites*, Men shall be for *Uniformity* in Worship at *Jerusalem*, in *Solomon's* Time, and yet, upon the Revolt of *Jeroboam*, are *divided* in their Worship; and if those who are zealous for the *Temple-Service* in one Reign, shall in another be *biggotted* to the *Calves* of *Bethel*, shall this be call'd *Reformation*, or shall such be said *to be turn'd unto the Lord*? No; especially when thus to act, is not properly



perly to *leave*, but rather to *choose* our Sins, what we will *keep*, and what we will *forbear*, and consequently to remain the *Servants* of Sin \*.

8. 34.  
16.

And as thus to be *partial* in leaving Sin, is not to Reform, so neither is it *safe* for the Nation, when *particular* Sins may be of dangerous Consequence to it, if allow'd, or not reprov'd.

7. 25.

2. 4.

For did not *Achan's* Sin trouble all *Israel*†? Or did not *Saul*, by slaying the *Gibeonites*, bring a *repeated Famine* upon the Land||? Nay, Lastly, did not *David's* Sin, in *numbring* the People, cause *Thousands* of them to dye by the *Pestilence* \*?

7. 24.

And why indeed should it be suppos'd, that a partial Leaving of Sin, will procure us *God's* Peace, (and if not *God's*, in vain do we assure our selves of *Man's*) when such Leaving of Sin is no more, than those can do, whose State in Scripture, is neither said to be *holy*, nor *safe*; nor is a greater Reformation than the Wicked can perform; who, might they *freely*, and with Safety, follow *some*, would join in opposing *other* Sins.

15. 10.

Thus, let *Jehu* have his Master's Kingdom, and also cleave to the Sin of *Jeroboam*, and, in other Matters, he shall shew his *Zeal for the Lord of Hosts*, in destroying *Baal*, and the House of *Abab*†: Let *Herod* be unrepov'd for *Herodias*, and he may yet hear the *Baptist*,

both *oft*, and *gladly*\* : Or let *Saul* spare *Agag*, <sup>†</sup> *Mra*  
 and the *best* of the Cattle, and no wonder if he  
 orders, or allows the *rest* to be destroy'd †. In <sup>†</sup> *ISa*  
 ſhort, let the *Pbariſee* devour the Widow's  
 Houſe, and he will not to this End *contract*, but  
*enlarge* his Praying ‖. <sup>‖</sup> *Mat.*

And now if, by theſe Inſtances, it appears,  
 that Men may avoid ſome Sins, and yet be  
*wicked*, can it be thought, if we Reform no  
 farther, we ſhall yet be ſafe? Or is it fit, that  
 GOD ſhould give us Peace in thoſe ways, in which  
 if we continue, we are Servants to Sin? No ;  
 Nor indeed doth the Scripture make us any  
 ſuch *Promise*, but rather the contrary. *Rom.* 6.  
 16. *Mat.* 23. 23. 25.

And thus having treated upon the ſeveral  
 Heads I propos'd, in the Beginning of this  
 Diſcourſe, it remains that I make ſome In-  
 ferences and conclude.

And, Firſt, is the Wickedneſs of a Nation  
 the chief Enemy, or Hindrance to its Peace and  
 Security, then do we learn from hence, how  
 imprudent and unſafe it is to expect them by  
 Sin? Nor is this only to be inferr'd from this  
 Head, and alſo ſuch Texts, that declare the  
*Wisdom from above*, to be *both pure and peace-*  
*able*\* : That Righteouſneſs and Peace, which <sup>†</sup> *James*  
 make a Kingdom happy, *do kiſs and embrace*  
*each other* †, but from ſeveral Inſtances, in <sup>†</sup> *Pſ.* 85  
 Scripture, concerning the *Danger* of evil Means  
 and

and Contrivances for the Support of any *Cause* or *People*.

And, First, tho' great was the Design and Undertaking of the People to build *Babel*, tho', whilst they agreed, their Success was the more *probable*; yet whereas their Design was no less to be above God's future Vengeance, than to get themselves a *Name*, we find, that notwithstanding their Agreement, their Contrivance ended at length in the *Confusion* of their Language, and their *Dispersion* upon the Face of the Earth \*.

Secondly, Tho', in *Zeal to the People*, Saul sought to slay the Gibeonites, yet did not this prove successful to them, any more than his Sacrificing was a Security to himself, and his Family, when as, for this Sin, he had the Prediction, that the Kingdom should not continue in his Line †: So, because of the other, a repeated Famine was brought upon the Land, even after his Death ||.

Thirdly, Tho' it was *Cajaphas* Advice and Prophecy, that *it was expedient* Christ should dye for the *Jewish Nation* \*, yet did not the following Event answer the End of this *Advice*, in *his* and the *Pharisee's* Design, when instead of preventing the *Coming* of the *Romans* against their Nation, they put an End to their *Peace*, and made even the *Romans*, the Executioners of God's *Vengeance* upon them.



It must be confess'd, that notwithstanding these Instances, how unsuccessful it is to seek a Nation's Safety, *in evil ways*; and also the Prohibition given, by St. Paul\*, against *doing Evil* \* Rom. that Good may come. They who attempt to secure its Peace, by such ways, may sometimes meet with Success for a *Season*, yet are not they therefore to be *imitated*, or depended upon as *safe*, and that not only, because they are sinful and forbidden, but because the *Providence of God* is not our *Rule* against his *Laws*; whilst God, for several Reasons, may *suffer* that to be done, which is not *allowed* us to do, nor *safe*: when, without Repentance, if the Punishment doth not fall upon the *Publick* here, (as oftentimes it doth) it will certainly be inflicted upon the *Evil-doers* hereafter. And accordingly, tho' *Jacob's Lye* was one Occasion of getting the Blessing from *Isaac*, yet is it not therefore to be justify'd, or imitated, when, besides his own Checks and Arguments against, it put his Father into *Trembling* under the Sense of it†.

But to draw towards the Conclusion of this first *Inference*. Tho' it is not for us always to know the Times and Seasons, that the Father hath put in his own Power ||, when he will deliver his Servants, who trust in him; or when he will put || Act a Stop to the *Ambition* and *Tyranny* of the *Mighty*: yet since, besides the aforementioned Instances of their evil Success, we are told, that

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3. 18. the Wicked are *set in slippery places*\*: and that,  
 20. *Tho' an Inheritance may be gotten hastily* ( or  
 unjustly ) *yet its End shall not be blessed*†. There  
 is little Reason to seek to sinful ways, for a Na-  
 tion's Safety; especially, when besides their Con-  
 trariety to the Covenanted ways of Success,  
 and the *Distrust*, and offending God therein, we  
 have a remarkable *Instance* amongst our *selves*,  
 how dangerous it is to do *Evil*, that *Good* may  
 come, *viz.* in the late *Civil Wars*, which tho'  
 design'd by some to hinder the *Growth of Po-*  
*pery*, were one great Occasion, whereby it  
 might have been *Entail'd* upon us, had not  
 GOD put a Stop to the Designs and Acts of  
*him*, whose being a *Papist*, was chiefly owing  
 to his *Exile*, and the *Death* of his *Father*.

Secondly, To proceed to another Inference:  
 From what hath been said, under the First  
 Head, we may justly fear, that however GOD  
 hath wonderfully preserv'd this Nation in Peace  
 and Safety, for many Years, we are not yet  
 free'd from the Danger of Confusion and Ruine,  
 unless we *Reform*, and that *speedily*.

If indeed, we would no less *perform*, than  
 we *talk* of Reformation, we have great Reason  
 to hope, that the present War may *end* in  
 Peace, and we shall still be safe from the *Common*  
*Enemy*: But are not the People of *this Land*, for  
 the Generality, still unreform'd? When, if there  
 be an *Abatement* of some Sins, *viz.* Swearing,

Curfing, Intemperance, publick Debauchery ; yet *others* are encreased, *viz.* not only Carelessness in GOD's *Service*, and the Keeping the Sabbath, but even the Contempt and Ridiculing of reveal'd Religion, and its *Ministers*. And now, if these Things be so, can it be expected that GOD will not *visit* for them, unless we Repent†? Surely, if for the Sins of this Nation, GOD hath formerly visited it with the *Sword*, with the *Plague* and *Fire* in our *Chiefest City*, we ought not to be careless and confident, but rather to Fear, Pray, and Repent, lest he scourge us with the like, or *greater* Punishments.

For tho', to encrease our Thankfulness and hasten our Return, it is true, that GOD hath wonderfully continued our *Peace*, tho' we are repriev'd from the *various Dangers* we fear'd and deserv'd, *both on the Right Hand and on the Left* : yet unless we Reform, and that *speedily*, who knows but the Dangers, we lately *fear'd*, may come upon us with an *Increase* ; or if not, we are not assur'd, but we may either be punish'd by those ways on Earth, that we least expected, or else more immediately by GOD's Vengeance from *Heaven* ; that tho' we escape the Wrath and *Sword* of Men, we may fall into the *Hands of God* ; and, if we believe the Scripture, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God* \*.



For, as GOD is not bound, by Human Rules, how he will *save*, so neither how he will *punish* a People; who cannot only cause the like Evils to befall them, which they hope are *remov'd* or *prevented*, but can make what, as to Human Apprehension is their *Safety*, to become their *Confusion* and *Punishment*.

Nor indeed is less to be fear'd, if we consider, that however the *Jews* were once GOD's *peculiar* People, and those whom he spar'd and deliver'd for *many Generations*; yet did they not always escape, but as, before Christ's Time, they were led Captive to *Babylon*, so were they afterwards destroy'd from being a *Nation*, and that at a Time when their Hopes were great, of being *sav'd* by a *Temporal Messiah*: And, if GOD spar'd not *them*, ought we not to Fear and Repent, lest otherwise he spare not *us*? And especially, when tho' GOD may spare us from *utter Ruine*, some time longer, this may not be in *Mercy*, but *Judgment*, to let us *fill up the Measure of our Sins*, and to be the sad *Presage*, that he is going to cast us off for ever, or to *pour his Wrath upon us to the utmost* \*.

33. 32.  
1. 16. To conclude, We may, with our *Sins*, keep our *Peace* also for a *while*; but unless we Reform, as *Jeremy* cries out, *What will ye do in the End thereof* †? For however, we may suppose our *Sores* to be heal'd, and our *Breaches* made up, yet if notwithstanding GOD's *Call*,  
31.

and our *QUEEN's* Desire, that we would *amend*, we yet suffer Vice and Immorality, Prophaneness and Irreligion to corrupt this Nation, we are yet in a dangerous Condition. Our *Wounds* may seem to be cover'd over, yet unless we endeavour to remove the Evils, that are the *Maladies* and Diseases, both of *Souls* and *Nations*, there is Reason to fear, that our Sores will break out again the more *incurably* upon us; at least, it is not a *promis'd*, but a *miraculous* Instance of *GOD's Long-suffering* and *Mercy*, if they do not; considering, amongst other Sins, our *Abuse* of former *Peace*, and *Ingratitude* for present *Safety*.

*F I N I S .*

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and our Quakers, Deists, Unitarians, and  
awakened, we yet better Wise and Immortal  
Prophane and Irreligious to corrupt this  
tion, we are yet in a dangerous condition. Our  
Society may soon be covered over, and we  
let us endeavor to remove the I. I. I. I. I.  
and the Abolition and Disunion, I. I. I. I. I.  
and Weymouth, there is reason to fear, that our  
Society will break up, and the more money we  
upon us; as we have not a penny, but a  
university, and a large number of students  
there, if they are not considered, and  
other things, our Society will be lost, and  
the whole will be lost.



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